

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 SSO-00 /003 W

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O 152046Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9836

UNCLAS CARACAS 8470

EO 11652 NA

TAGS: CDES/VE (RUNYAN, BERT OTIS)

SUBJ: DEATH OF RUNYAN

REFS: STATE 190920, 91634

1. IT IS DEFINITELY IMPOSSIBLE TO EXHUME RUNYAN'S REMAINS AT THIS TIME, AS THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH WILL NOT GIVE PERMISSION TO DO SO. THE VENEZUELAN LAW IS VERY SPECIFIC IN THIS MATTER. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SHIP THE CADAVER TO THE US WITHOUT EMBALMING IT. THE BODY COULD NOT BE EMBALMED IN ITS CURRENT STATE OF DECOMPOSITION, EVEN IF VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES COULD GIVE PERMISSION.

2. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO EXHUME THE REMAINS AT LATER DATE, THE VENEZUELAN DEATH CERTIFICATE AND BURIAL CERTIFICATE MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH WITH THE REQUEST FOR EXHUMATION. THIS IS USUALLY DONE BY THE LOCAL FUNERAL HOME WHICH WILL EXHUME THE REMAINS AND PREPARE IT FOR SHIPMENT. THE EMBASSY WILL REQUEST THE NECESSARY LEGAL COPIES OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL CERTIFICATES FROM THE VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES AND WILL FORWARD THEM TO MRS. BURNS WHEN THEY ARE AVAILABLE.

3. EMBASSY WAS NOTIFIED OF RUNYAN'S DEATH APPROXIMATELY 22 HOURS AFTER IT OCCURRED BY MR. RAMON ROMERO THE SON OF MS. ANDREA DEL VALLE SOTO ROMERO, A WIDOW WITH WHOM RUNYAN HAD BEEN LIVING FOR 25 YEARS. BURIAL TOOK PLACE 72 HOURS FOLLOWING DEATH.

4. OUR DIRECT RELAY IMMEDIATE TELEGRAM 7988 OF AUGUST 4,
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INFORMING MRS. BURNS OF HER BROTHER'S DEATH WAS DELAYED IN

REACHING HER, BECAUSE IT WAS ADDRESSED TO TILLER, TEXAS, ADDRESS GIVEN BY MR. ROMERO, RATHER THAN TILLER, ARKANSAS. DEPT'S IMMEDIATE SERVICE MESSAGE OF AUG 5 REQUESTED VERIFICATION OF ADDRESS. EMBASSY RESPONDED WITHIN MINUTES PROVIDING CORRECT STATE WHICH FINALLY WAS LOCATED IN PROTECTION AND WELFARE FILES.

5. MR. RUNYAN HAD NEVER GIVEN EMBASSY ANY NAMES OF NEXT OF KIN IN THE US WHEN APPLYING FOR PASSPORTS. HE ALWAYS GAVE MS. SOTO ROMERO'S NAME AS PERSON TO BE NOTIFIED IN CASE OF DEATH. MRS. BURNS HAD WRITTEN EMBASSY SEVERAL TIMES REQUESTING INFO REGARDING HER BROTHER. THIS CORRESPONDENCE WAS IN PROTECTION AND WELFARE FILES.

6. IT WAS CONSULAR OFFICER'S AND LOCAL STAFF'S IMPRESSION FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH MR. RUNYAN AND MS. SOTO ROMERO AT THE TIME HE APPLIED FOR LAST PASSPORT ON JULY 16, 1975, THAT RUNYAN WANTED TO BE BURIED IN VENEZUELA WHICH HAD BEEN HIS HOME FOR MANY YEARS. MR. ROMERO INDICATED TO STAFF WHEN HE CALLED AT EMBASSY AUGUST 5 TO DELIVER DEATH CERTIFICATE THAT RUNYAN HAD RAISED HIM AND WAS LIKE A FATHER TO HIM. HE IS AIR FORCE OFFICER ON DUTY AT MARACAY AND HAD MADE 9 TO 10 HOUR DRIVE TO CIUDAD BOLIVAR TO MAKE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS SHLAUDEMANN

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